



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

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# News Release

## **Phoenix receives one of seven new Fugitive Operations teams deployed nationwide**

*Nation's 45 teams now account for more than 1,000 illegal alien arrests a week*

PHOENIX — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has added a Fugitive Operations team here in Phoenix to locate and arrest aliens who fail to comply with court orders to leave the United States.

ICE Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers today announced that Phoenix and six other cities, including Los Angeles, Atlanta, Houston, Newark, Washington, D.C. and Raleigh, NC, have recently received new Fugitive Operations teams, bringing the total number of teams nationwide to 45.

Since October, the ICE Fugitive Operations team in the Phoenix area has made more than 300 arrests, of which 185 were criminal fugitives. These arrests include previously deported aliens with convictions for aggravated felonies as well as those who have absconded from immigration court orders.

ICE Fugitive Operations teams have federal authorities and nationwide jurisdiction. Though based in specific offices, the teams can be deployed to conduct operations anywhere fugitive alien populations are located in the United States. These teams use intelligence-based information and leads to find, arrest, and place into removal proceedings aliens who have been ordered to leave the country by an immigration judge, but have failed to comply -- making them fugitive aliens.

“The United States is a land of opportunity, but it is also a nation of laws,” said Assistant Secretary Myers. “As such, an immigration judge’s order of removal is not optional and must be followed. The addition of these new fugitive teams increases ICE’s ability to aggressively pursue immigration violators as part of our nationwide interior enforcement strategy.”

The teams prioritize their efforts to arrest fugitive and other illegal aliens according to public safety criteria and other factors. Of the more than 52,000 illegal aliens apprehended by ICE Fugitive Operations teams since the first teams were created in 2003, roughly 22,669 had convictions for crimes including homicide, sexual assault against children, robbery, violent assault, narcotics trafficking, and other aggravated felonies.

By the end of September, a total of 52 Fugitive Operations teams are scheduled to be operational nationwide. The Administration's FY 2007 proposed budget would allow ICE to deploy an additional 18 teams. The 45 Fugitive Operations teams currently in existence are collectively apprehending more than 1,000 illegal aliens a week.

"Getting fugitive aliens off of our streets is a top ICE priority," said Phillip Crawford, the Field Office Director for ICE's Detention and Removal Operations in Arizona. "Those who remain at large are being advised – if you ignore an immigration judge's order we are going to find you and send you home."

ICE Fugitive Operations teams are assigned to local offices of ICE Detention and Removal Operations, which often have responsibility for more than one state. Many regional and local offices have more than one team in areas where the fugitive populations are estimated to be more numerous.

Currently the following ICE offices have Fugitive Operations teams: Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New York City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Seattle, San Francisco, San Antonio, San Diego, St. Paul, MN and Washington, DC.

The Fugitive Operations teams are a crucial part of ICE's interior immigration enforcement. A critical element of this interior enforcement strategy is to identify and remove criminal aliens, fugitives, and other immigration violators from the United States.

The interior enforcement strategy is part of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), which is the Department of Homeland Security's comprehensive, multi-year plan to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration. SBI's border security efforts are focused on gaining operational control of the nation's borders through additional personnel and technology, while re-engineering the detention and removal system to ensure that illegal aliens are removed from the country quickly.

The interior enforcement strategy complements the Department's border security efforts by expanding existing efforts to target immigration violators inside this country, employers of illegal aliens, as well as the many criminal networks that support these activities. The primary objectives are to reverse the tolerance of illegal employment and illegal immigration in the United States.

# ICE #